

## ENGAGING CONSUMERS WITH HEALTH COST INFORMATION

### THE SITUATION

You have put off having your first routine colonoscopy. Your doctor is now insisting you schedule one asap. You comfort yourself by thinking that although you don't want to have a colonoscopy you do want to find the best doctor, one that's affordable (i.e. cheap) and best quality (i.e. nothing goes wrong). The problem is you have no idea where to find information on colonoscopy costs or quality, so you call your doctors office. They suggest you call the Consumers for Affordable Healthcare (CAHC) on their toll free helpline to find out about costs. In terms of quality, they say that all the area Gastroenterology practices have good doctors.

You call the helpline and they refer you to the Maine Health Data Organization's Health Cost website, and also suggest you check out your health plan member's website. They say that some information on treatment costs and doctor ratings is now being provided by health plans for their members. You open your computer and start your search for the best doctor ...

### THE EXERCISE

**STEP ONE:** You google Maine Health Data Organization (MHDO). You open the MHDO website and click on Health Costs. Using your insurance information and home zip code find the least expensive Preventative Health Colonoscopy cost and, just to prove your getting a good deal, the most expensive within a 25-mile radius of your home. Then you:

**1. Record the range of colonoscopy cost information provided.**

Lowest cost:

Highest cost:

**2. Check to see if you can find any information about the quality of care provided?**

**STEP TWO:** You google your health plan and open the member website. The use the cost estimate function to access cost estimates on preventative or screening colonoscopy within a 25-mile radius of your home. Then you:

**Record the range of colonoscopy costs estimates provided.**

Lowest Cost:

Highest Cost:

**2. Check to see if you can find any information about the quality of care provided?**

**STEP THREE:** To further educate yourself, you check out estimates of fair colonoscopy costs on the Fair Health website at <http://www.fairhealthconsumer.org/> and the Healthcare Bluebook website at <http://www.healthcarebluebook.com/> Then you:

**1. Record the range of colonoscopy cost information provided.**

Lowest cost:

Highest cost:

**2. Check to see if you can find any information about the quality of care provided?**

**STEP THREE:** Just for the fun of it you check out the NH Health Cost website at <http://www.nhhealthcost.org/default.aspx> and, using the zip code 03848 along with your insurance information, find the least and most expensive providers of a Preventative Health Colonoscopy (outpatient) within a 20-mile radius. Then you:

**1. Record the range of colonoscopy cost information provided.**

Lowest cost

Highest cost:

**2. Check to see if you find any information about the quality of care provided?**

**FINAL STEP: As you think about the health cost websites, their set up and the information provided, you rate each on a scale of 1-5 as follows:**

**1. The website provided the information I need to find the most affordable colonoscopy**

- \_\_\_\_\_ MHDO
- \_\_\_\_\_ Your Heath Plan
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fair Health
- \_\_\_\_\_ Blue Book
- \_\_\_\_\_ NH Health Cost

**2. The website provided the information I need to find the best quality doctor?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ MHDO
- \_\_\_\_\_ Your Heath Plan
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fair Health
- \_\_\_\_\_ Blue Book
- \_\_\_\_\_ NH Health Cost

**3. I will definitely use the website again**

- \_\_\_\_\_ MHDO
- \_\_\_\_\_ Your Heath Plan
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fair Health
- \_\_\_\_\_ Blue Book
- \_\_\_\_\_ NH Health Cost

**4. I will recommend the website to others**

- \_\_\_\_\_ MHDO
- \_\_\_\_\_ Your Heath Plan
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fair Health
- \_\_\_\_\_ Blue Book
- \_\_\_\_\_ NH Health Cost